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Saturday, January 25, 1969
Barn
Lunch
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Sunday, January 26, 1969
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Lunch

Saturday Lunch

Mr. Nyland: Start it, Art. Huh? Is it going?

It's always very difficult to get rid of your own personality. Because naturally that what you use to express yourself ... and it is you, and whatever comes out takes on the form of the channel through which it flows. So, it is not always what you say and it is not always whatever your posture may be, it is what is expressed by it. And when you live in a community you have to consider that: That although people can get used to you the way you are and they can make allowances for it, it does not mean that you have to impose that what you are on other people ... and perhaps the occasion doesn't demand it and when it happens, it may be wrong for the particular occasion.

It's not so much a question of studying your own idiosyncrasy in respect to how you manifest. Because that, I think, is extremely difficult to get rid of. It will always have to be that kind of a form through which you happen to express your life. But what is necessary is, together with that—whatever you are and whatever you express—to introduce something that belongs to everybody, and the functions of a Group, the function of working together, is that what should be expressed in whatever you do in relation to each other, is that you remember the aim—why you are doing it. That is, if you can get rid of at least a little bit ... a little part of your personality and if you can get rid of a little bit of the consideration of the other person's personality, that then there is a chance and there is room for something else to be expressed.

And that has to be the feeling: That you are doing this kind of thing quite naturally for

yourself, but in doing it for yourself that something else is involved which is ... because a group of people who are working together. And of course when we talk about the floor and about the different things we have to do, it is easy because each person can express himself or herself any way they like and it does not carry any particular responsibility, but when you work together on something that has to be done and finished, or certain things for which one wants to take a responsibility and although theoretically you can agree that it is necessary, there are times, of course, when you don't want to take the responsibility because you are concerned too much with yourself.

If at times when you think about the Barn, about the hotel, about what you are doing or wherever we 'congregate,' as it were and whenever you are together, if at the time that you are not there you keep on thinking, "How will it be when I'm there." That is, if you imagine when you are just by yourself and you happen to think about Work, you happen to think about the Barn and what you are engaged in in your life now—and the reasons, of course, why you come and why you spend the time, why you want to prefer one thing or another; that at times when you are talking to yourself, when you can come to yourself, then in that sense simply and imagine ... imagining how you will be and also in all truthfulness try to see how you have been. Perhaps at the end of the day and perhaps early in the morning, that you say I'm going into a certain situation which will require on my part a definite attitude; and I would like to be clear how that attitude should be—what is expected of me, what do others want me to be; and what can I be and what do I want to be, for them—and to what extent can I, in whatever I'm doing, remember that aim.

This is a question, then, of how to work together and how to find a responsibility for certain things that have to be done—and sometimes have to be done by you because someone else is not doing it, or you have been asked to do it—and that you do it then for the sake of that kind of work and you don't do it because someone has asked you. You don't work here for someone else. I think you must realize that. You work here for Work's sake. You work here for the possibility of the creation of a certain atmosphere, or a little bit of a world in which there is a chance for you not to be hampered, and in creating that you will then enable other people also to be whatever they should be or can be—or at least that you are not in their way when they want to be whatever they can be.

It's very difficult sometimes to understand how to Be, not only for yourself but how to Be

in the presence of someone else. And to some extent, it depends very much on how much you care. Because if you really care, you might say it is ‘easy.’ The difficulty comes in when you don’t care, and still there is a requirement. How else can I say it. Because it is not just an ordinary common affair of trying to learn to work together. You have to introduce something on the basis of Work; because if that isn’t there, this becomes ordinary, commonplace, unconscious behavior, and there is something expected of you when you actually profess to be interested in Gurdjieff. When that is there, then I’m sure in good moments you will remember; and in the bad moments when you actually are confronted with the situation, I hope that afterwards when you think about it, that you cannot be sorry and ... that you will not be sorry, and perhaps if you should be sorry, that then you have the determination to try to improve or to do better.

All of that has nothing to do with being Conscious. It has to do with making your body, and that what is the expression of your personality, behave in accordance with a certain rule about which you happen to think when you are in a good state, and how you visualize this Group as a whole to function for the sake of the creation of something unusual. Because there is no doubt about the unusualness when one talks about Objectivity, and it is sometimes very difficult to see to what extent you are part of it. And you forget; because you come here, you want to Work then and you do it, and you don’t consider other people—not too much; only when you happen to step on their toe, and even then probably you won’t say “excuse me,” or “I’m sorry.”

I think at the end of a day—and you have to look at it, for instance, tonight—you consider how you have been during this day and that actually, in all truthfulness, you can say to yourself, “I have not behaved the way I wanted to behave,” and I criticize myself for what I have been. Because I should have known better; I couldn’t, so the fact of the acceptance still remains, but the fact that I consider it—so that it becomes important to me—that will help you tomorrow.

If you don’t do certain things on this day, you won’t do them tomorrow. This is the whole purpose: Of trying to see to what extent can you grow, and can you use this and not just take it easy because tomorrow is another day and *then* you will Work. The question of Work is always *now*. If you understand *now* is a responsibility on you, then you take it and don’t postpone it, or don’t find excuses. Don’t think that it will be different tomorrow. Because you carry always with you your own troubles. That is your personality, and that is the way you have to Work.

Because, that’s the only thing you’ve got in this life. *That* you can call your own; because you can become responsible for it ... and then there has to be something like your Conscience,

which has to be trained and adjusted in accordance with whatever your wisdom is, whatever you think about what is the need for a Group of this kind and to what extent do I wish to take a responsibility of behaving in such a way that I'm at least not in the way of someone—that perhaps by being that, I can help.

At the end of the day, before you go to bed and you sit down or you're on your knees ... I do not care what kind of religious attitude you will want to take, when you consider yourself as having spent one day of your life, what it is into your life, then, during that day that you actually have done for your own growth, and to what extent have you been influencing other people and prevented them to grow. That's a question of your Conscience, and I think you have to remember it. Because, it comes out in very small things. When certain events happen, one faces them as they happen. One has to meet them the way they are and it happens to be, then, that kind of an event, and it is not right at such a time to remember what has happened in the past. Because that would determine your particular attitude of how you should behave—still letting the past influence you, and then you say “Yes,” or “No, I don't want to do that because such-and-such.” That isn't right. You still have to straighten out the different things regarding yourself and whatever relationship you may have had with anyone. That doesn't matter—that will stay there—but don't let it influence your judgment when certain events require you to behave in a certain way. Don't say “No” when it is really necessary to say “Yes.” But you must know that you have to say “Yes” for a definite purpose, and not based on your own little bit of fancy, or something that has been passed already long ago and that was not straightened out. If it is straightened out, you can go ahead and you won't have to think about it.

But you will have to consider your time; whatever you have spent during this day, if you are serious and if you want to take that as a kind of a task, that you then consider what has happened in your judgments, in the words you have said, your attitude towards others, what you have advised them, to what extent have you let go and flown off the handle or be angry unnecessarily, to what extent have you spent your energy, in what way have you misused it, to what extent have you satisfied your own desires at the expense of someone else.

These are very ordinary ethical questions, and they have to do with ordinary life. And when we work here in the Barn, we work ninety nine percent with our ordinary existence and only once in a while, I know, that you will remember that you are here for a definite purpose of trying to Wake Up. It doesn't happen. You will be very glad and happy—and, actually, you can

be satisfied—if you happen to think every once in a while about Work.

And, this is not the kind of Work, that you are going to stop it in order to come to yourself that easily at the expense of someone else who's doing some other work that is dependent on you. If you wish, I have said it many times you can go out for five or ten minutes—take a walk and come to yourself, come back—but then you have to come back in such a way that you're not a detriment. That's why I talk about Conscience. Because you're not alone in this world. You are not alone in this Group. You are with a Group and the responsibilities of the Group, *that* rests on you and on everybody else's shoulders. It applies to the Barn, it applies to outside, it applies to wherever you work. It applies to the hotel. It applies to different places where we happen to work at the present time. All the time your attitude should be: What is it that is needed of me. How do I behave, then, for that kind of a condition. What can I do if I see that it is wrong, to change it. Even if you are angry, go away, come back, then don't be angry. Even if there is some kind of a suffering that takes place, go away for a little while and come back.

Otherwise, don't come back. Don't impose on someone else if you possibly can help it. Because that's the sign of a person who wishes to grow. It doesn't matter that he eliminates what he cannot face. Whatever you have to face, you have to. If you cannot do it, you have to postpone it if you can. And if you cannot do it any other way, then just don't do anything and go off somewhere. When an animal is sick, he goes away from his family. He tries to find his place so that he can get well. He doesn't want the influences of other people. He wants to be in an animal world, and then when he is well again he will come back.

This is the way we should be. Whenever you know yourself well enough—that there are certain things that are obnoxious to someone—eliminate yourself, or change the conditions so that another person has a chance. All the time remember you are with other people. When work has to be done at the hotel, don't hesitate to do it. You just do it. Because it is necessary for the common aim of a community to live together in such a way that everybody actually can get their share of the life of that community. Don't be selfish. Don't be within yourself too much. You're a person of the outside world. You belong to that, and you cannot withdraw.

So as I say, happen to think about it this afternoon. Even when you sit in the truck. Even when you have difficulty that the truck might get off the road. Even if there is something that is not sharp, like a chisel. Even there are certain things that don't work out the way you would like them to work out. Even when you're unhappy. All of that belongs to ordinary life, and it

belongs to life as we know it. And we from our standpoint of trying to Work to become Objective, to see what is the value of that ordinary life in our own life and to what extent you want it to take place in your life, then the question is: To what extent can you digest it and eat it. Not to pass it by and not to get more angry, but simply to take things for whatever they are—at least the way you believe they are—so that you can have regarding outside work, outside life, outside manifestations, within yourself a piece of your heart. From there you will Work. And to that you come when you wish to come to yourself.

Have a good afternoon. [toast]

[pause]

There is another thing I would like to mention. Primarily, work here is physical. We spoil it a little bit every once in a while, even when I talk or when I play. Still, I believe that at times it is necessary to be reminded of Work. Because you get caught up ... and you get caught in this as a trap. And sometimes it is explainable because you want to do it right and you forget. And this constant fight about unconsciousness and trying to become a Man, trying to understand the meaning of life—it is terribly difficult. But that is, I call it, the ‘pragmatic condition’ of life on Earth, and that is what we have to work with and that is our personality, and that we cannot help. We are what we are because of the past and whatever has influenced us, and there we are: Different idiosyncratic types with all kinds of Chief Features, different tendencies and characteristics; all the different things that every one of us personally has to see and perhaps then is able to overcome if he wants to Work ... or if he believes that that what he is as a personality on Earth is not as yet ready to become an Individuality in Heaven.

So when I suggest, now, something that is a little unusual, I do it really with an idea in mind that you must remember, time and time again, that you come here for a purpose for your life; and that this work together is only an opportunity, and then when it is something that you can then place, or something that you can then, because of it happening can remind you, it might help you for the rest of the day. That is why tomorrow morning when I play piano a little bit, it is also to put a certain level in your life.

But for instance, last evening I talked about two important things which were based on the impressions I had gotten from a few Groups here in New York, and also from a few Groups outside. And in listening to the tapes, it occurred to me how necessary it is to clear up quite fundamental things which apparently are not entirely understood, or not sufficiently clear. One

is the question of approach; sometimes we call it ‘intellectual’ and sometimes it’s called ‘emotional,’ and the different things that are involved in that—in having to recognize what still is the aim, even if the approach may be slightly different. That was one particular subject. And the other had to do with the beauty of life as we know it on Earth and the temptation there is, in considering that as a high emotional state, as a substitute for Work. And I tried to explain that. At least I tried to use a few words in order to see to what extent it could have perspective. So in thinking about that and being sorry like I, sometimes, am when certain people are not there ... and I cannot expect you to be there because the week is already filled with many different things; and for that reason you might say the tape can ‘replace’ a little bit of that, tomorrow morning after I have played music we will play that tape, for everybody who is here, before you start any physical work.

I would just like you to listen to it. I would like you to try to take the idea of what I had in mind and what I know exists in different Groups and must without any question exist in all of you: That at times you are confronted with what is now the place of beauty regarding Work; and what is it that I really wish when intellectually I object to the ABC; what is it I still can do and consider it Work instead of having an idea that perhaps I’m not working when I don’t say Observation, Impartiality, Simultaneity, Participation, Experimentation, Intentional Suffering, Conscious Labor. Those are words. They are ... indicate a certain state and they are right to understand them, but they don’t—and should not—touch your life. And sometimes it’s absolutely necessary to put your life; not in terminology, but to see what is the place of your feeling and what is the place of your emotional state. So, it is with that in mind that I would like those who wish, to listen to it tomorrow before you go into your physical activity.

We should try to extract from these days—Saturdays and Sundays—as much as you possibly can. You should come here hungry, you should leave satisfied—at least to help you for a week. I made an unfortunate suggestion last week: That during the week, after two o’clock I still would be free during the week days for those people who are in the neighborhood. I have to retract that, because it is not right. Everybody will come because I open that door. I will close it, because it is not right for me. Every day there is something that happens, and then my day is not the way the day should be for me when I have an aim to try to do certain things that I want to think about or consider. And it is not ... really not necessary to have an interference of that when your questions—or whatever it is that you want to ask, or for whatever reason you want to come

and talk a little—can be done with the proper arrangement on Saturday and Sunday. And even if I let down there—that Saturday morning or a time before lunch, or even on Sunday that the ‘whole day,’ as it were, can be spent in wanting to talk—if that is necessary, of course it can be done. So, no more disturbance during the week. Almost, I would say, “Please, leave me alone.” I really need it.

Next week I will be most of the week in Boston. Boston requires, I think at the present time, some attention. I would like to spend there more time than I have done. I’ve treated it a little bit like a step child. And one can honestly say, when I try to find the time to go to the West Coast and I don’t spend it in Boston which is so much nearer, why is it that I don’t. I would like to correct it, because I don’t think it is right. I think that Boston as a whole, and as a Group, should take a proper place in relation to work here, and that we should work much more together. That it is not only by having people come here or perhaps some people go to Boston, but that also the activities of the Boston Group as a whole, I hope that we will be able to find some people who can take a definite responsibility; the same way as we do here regarding transcriptions or index work, or work of that kind to help them in regard of reading or listening or whatever it may be, that some kind of a foundation is laid much stronger than exists at the present time. I want to talk with them. I want to know them. I want to find out what is really sometimes holding up progress. Because Boston is a big city, and the Group is as yet not sufficiently alive—not sufficiently. I think it needs, perhaps, a little help.

So, that is where I will be part of the week. I will be back in time for music next Friday. Again I say, without any other thought, the opportunities that are at the present time, that what happens to be, you might say, because I happen to be ... that what happened to me in my life as a result of being in contact with Gurdjieff for some years, and you might also say the ‘desire’ on my part to want to help to communicate and to carry on a certain kind of work that Gurdjieff started and I believe with the aim of having it maintained—that all of that, if you look at it, according to my opinion, in the right way, gives you at the present time an opportunity to be in touch with something quite valuable. And that I hope you can take as much as you possibly can; even if you store it up; even if, like a chicken you eat and eat and eat, and afterwards you digest. It is like a cow. It is to take in whatever there is so that afterwards you may be able to derive something from that kind of a stored-up energy and digest it at a later time: when your own life has started to develop, and because of that kind of development and life’s experience, one added

after another, has enabled you to see certain things a little differently and from a standpoint which will give you much more understanding and wisdom than maybe at the present time it is possible for you.

I remember Gurdjieff saying a few times, “Take, take, take.” He meant that: Exhaust it so that really, in later years you don’t accuse yourself ... or in that kind of a criticism that you might call yourself a stupid fool. Don’t be stupid.

I’ll play a little bit.

Sunday Lunch

Mr. Nyland: Sometimes I think that we might have a little complaint box so that each person who has any ideas of how we ought to run this establishment can have their say and then hope for the best. And if there were any kind of complaint in the box, it would be up to me to find out what to do with it.

My inclination of course is, such complaints, to collect them every week and then put them in the waste basket. The reason I say this is because it is extremely difficult to satisfy everybody. Because whenever one starts to Work, there are ideas that occur to you and that you feel that certain things ought to be done or not done, usually in connection with whatever your own development happens to be; and that the difficulty of doing certain things for a group of people have very little to do with what is needed for individual desires, and that one ought to know a little bit more about why things are happening if you consider the totality of everybody who is concerned. That it is difficult for me to know what is right or wrong, naturally depends on how much I understand of the different people who make up a community, and everyone in this kind of a Group is entitled to receive something for their own benefit.

So when I, in the nature of an experiment, tried this morning to have a little bit of listening to a tape, I did it quite intentionally. In the first place, experimentally. In the second place, that I hoped and thought that it might be useful, at least to some. To what extent that now is fifty percent—or more or even less—I do not know, but whatever it is that happens regarding Work, whatever it is that is with activity of a different kind here at the Barn or at Amity or wherever it is, whatever is connected with activity in New York, whatever it is that has relation to meetings—all of that has in it the possibility of being used for your own benefit of growth. And sometimes you can say I can use seventy-five percent and sometimes maybe ten percent; and

really it doesn't make very much difference to me, because all I wish to do is to give, or create, opportunities for as many as is possible who can take ... take that—whatever there is—for them. And it depends a great deal on your own development of what you need—and your own wish, of how deep it goes—that you actually want something for yourself, so that even the negativity can help you to Work. Exactly because you can complain and even if nothing would be done about it, that what causes you concern—positive or negative—is always useful for your Work.

For your Work you need energy in some form or other which is produced in you in an unconscious state. It doesn't matter how it happens to be there; and sometimes it's the influence from outside which then is taken in—in your own physiological constitution; or that what is already there as thoughts and feelings you might say 'stored away' and at a certain time want to come out because they have to be expressed.

You are a storehouse, a little factory manufacturing certain things which you call 'manifestations' and for which there are raw materials imported into your body or already in reserve as an inventory of yourself. And when this factory starts functioning, *you* are the manager. It doesn't matter then what is needed when you realize what is available, and maybe sometimes the material you get from the outside may be the wrong kind of a shipment and it might cause complaints to those who are sending it to you. And maybe sometimes the material that is in your inventory has been rotted away partly because it was stored away too long without being used or it may not have been properly inspected at the time when it was received, and then when you then look at it and you want it for a certain purpose, it may not be useful for that purpose that you then have in mind—maybe to manufacture certain articles in order to produce them and sell them to the public.

These are the questions that come up in management ... and you are the manager of your own body, of your own little world, in that what you happen to have as property and for which you are responsible, and anyone who starts to complain about not having this or that and very often saying that certain conditions are 'not conducive,' really shows ignorance of how to use all the different opportunities that are given. There are certain limits, probably, because the same as you cannot breathe when you are under water, so there are certain conditions for which ... in which Work as such is absolutely impossible. But there are really very few, and I think that it depends entirely on the person; with his desire and whatever he feels is needed for him that at that time he knows he has to be filled in some way or other, that he then looks left and right and

forwards and backwards and up and down in order to find the opportunities for him so that that energy that is available in him can be put to use and converted for the purpose of Waking Up.

So I have very little, really, that I want to consider as far as general complaints are concerned. The opportunities are here. If you wish to use them, use them. If you cannot, stay away. That is my attitude towards it in trying to create this kind of an affair and a Barn and activities. And I say again, I'm not at all attached to it. It is there for you all to use. I don't need it particularly, but that it is very useful to me when you do come and that I have an opportunity to watch you.

I think that it is necessary that you understand my particular attitude. I am not interested in just having certain things for my own satisfaction. Because, like a little tape this morning that it is a repetition of what I have said on Friday, it was enough—what I said on Friday—and those who were there could use it and those who were not there, for them it may have been useful this morning and if it isn't, it doesn't matter very much to me. It may matter to you. When you get into a state about it, then it is just about time for you to consider it for yourself—what you are—and to what extent you even want to allow that in your world. At times I think your factory is a little bit in decadence, and then you have to revise it and perhaps overhaul it.

I hope you will have a good afternoon. I hope that you will be able to extract from whatever opportunities—cold weather or warm weather, or difficult situation in which you find yourself—something for yourself. And when you do it and when you take something for yourself, make sure that you don't take it away from someone else; so that the resultant attitude on your own part is completely for your own, and that whatever it is that you create as an atmosphere is not deleterious to those you work with. I think that's very necessary to understand that as an activity of a Group as a whole, and in order to become sufficiently serious about the attempts that we are trying to make. Don't criticize—only yourself. Find out what is worthwhile. If you are in a stupid kind of a mood, it is just too bad that you are. Try to get out of it; and if you cannot, go and take a walk.

Sounds very strange when I say this probably, and you may think that I am angry. And I am not in the least angry. I am talking about conditions in ordinary life; where every person has states of that kind, and when sometimes the astrological or whatever may be the influences on him, that he is in a certain way and that he doesn't know what to do with it. And there are many impossibilities in life; and you have to know it; because if you have wisdom you must know

what you are ... and the whole purpose of Work on yourself is to find out *for sure* what you are so that there is no possibility of a misinterpretation on your part, and no particular justification because you want to rationalize.

For me, of course, life in this direction, and life on Earth, is very serious. It is something that, when we get here together it is then the question: What do you take with you besides a little food of a physical kind. What is it that you can extract out of yourself that you, being within and present to yourself, can convert into something much more worthwhile—of a different plane, a different rate of vibration, a different something that actually means of getting closer to whatever you wish to call your ‘God’—so that your life becomes much more towards the inside of what is your inner existence, and away all the time from that what...in which you live all the time: Your ordinary outside manifestations and the outer surface, which is so thin that you ought to be ashamed of it every once in a while.

Have a good afternoon.

End of tape